

U.S. Application Serial No.: 09/737,655

Reply to Office Action of: **January 30, 2004**

REMARKS

The undersigned wishes to thank Examiner Charles Kim and Supervisory Patent Examiner Amelia M. Au for the courtesy extended to him during the personal interview at the US Patent Office on May 25, 2004.

Applicants also wish to thank Examiner Charles Kim for the courtesy extended to the undersigned during the telephone interview on February 5, 2004. It was discussed during this telephone interview and confirmed in the interview summary that the Examiner's statement provided in paragraph 1 on page 2 of the Office Action concerning the information Disclosure Statement was improper and the Information Disclosure Statement was indeed considered by the Examiner and made of record in the application.

As to the Examiner's comments presented in paragraph 2 of the Office Action concerning the drawings, a copy of FIGURE 1 having designation --- Prior Art--- is enclosed for the Examiner's approval. Upon Examiner's approval, an amended formal drawing of FIGURE 1 will be prepared and submitted.

It is respectfully considered that the Examiner's remarks concerning the objection of claims 1-4, 6-8 under 37 CFR 1.75(a) and d(1) are moot in view of the amendment of the claims provided in the Response.

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Applicants also respectfully consider that the Examiners rejection of claims 1-9 under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite is moot in view of the amendment of the claims provided in the Response.

As to the substantive rejection claims 1-3, 5-8 are rejected under 35 USC 102(e), as being anticipated by US Patent 5, 933,249 to Shimura et al. (Shimura reference hereinafter). Claims 4 and 9 have been rejected by the Examiner under 35 USC 103(a), as being obvious over the combination of the Shimura reference and US Patent 5,809,161 to Auty et al. (the Auty patent hereinafter).

The Shimura reference discloses an image processing method suitable for processing images in which characters and photographs coexist. Efficient encoding is realized by dividing an image into areas of different natures (col. 3 line 65-col. 4, line 3). These areas are encoded in different encoding steps. This is effected in that an image is stored in a frame memory. An area identifier divides the image data existent in the frame memory into rectangular areas of different natures, and then places structural information in an area identification memory.

For decoding, image decoding means are used, in which an encoding mode discriminator interprets discriminant information including structural information which is appended to coded data. (col. 6, lines 14-19). Differently coded data are decoded in different ways.

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Thus, the structural information appended to the coded data is used for identifying the code mode and the entire image is decoded. Contrary hereto, the present invention labels the data segments in order to decode only a part of the image. This allows a quick retrieval of essential picture information for decompression. In the opinion of the applicants this task can not be achieved by the methods described by the Shimura reference.

It has been discussed during the May 25, 2004 Interview that the manner in which the data is compressed in the present invention is different from that of the cited prior art in general and by the Shimura specifically. In this respect, the Examiner's attention is referred to FIGURE 3 which shows a schematic diagram of the segmented digital picture as stored in the memory after the data segments are selectively compressed to a different degree of compression. Applicants respectfully consider that the Shimura does not disclose that the plurality of data segments are being stored in the data storing memory in such a manner that some of such segments are not being compressed, some of such segments are being slightly compressed, and some of such segments are being heavily compressed. This novel feature of the invention is positively recited in at least new claims 11, 12 and 16, 17 submitted in the Response.

Applicants have made the best faith effort to place the application in condition for allowance. However, if any issue raised by the PTO has

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inadvertently been left unanswered, the Examiner is authorized to call the undersigned at the telephone number indicated below.

A certified copy of German Patent Application S. N. 19960887.3 filed December 17, 1999, priority of which is claimed by the present application, accompanies this Response.

Applicants respectfully Petition for a one month extension of time to reply. A separate petition and a check in the amount of \$110.00 accompany this Response.

Respectfully submitted,
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